

CR electrodes are configured across the aspiration aperture 1825, clogging and blockage of the aperture is prevented or reduced.

In the claims:

Please cancel claims 46 and 51-59 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claims 41-45 and 47-50 as follows:

subd
41. (Amended) A surgical instrument for treating tissue comprising an elongate probe member having (i) proximal and distal portions, the distal portion having a distal surface and first and second spaced-apart electrodes coupled to the distal surface and adapted to engage the tissue, and (ii) first and second electrical leads carried by the elongate probe member and extending to the distal portion, the first and second electrical leads being coupled respectively to the first and second electrodes for supplying electrical energy to the first and second electrodes, the first electrode being an active electrode and the second electrode being a return electrode,

wherein the distal surface defines an aspiration aperture and the elongate probe member defines a lumen extending to the aspiration aperture, and each of the first and second electrodes has a portion extending across the aspiration aperture.

C19
42. (Amended) The surgical instrument of claim 41 wherein at least one of the first and second electrodes has a portion spaced outwardly from the distal surface.

43. (Amended) The surgical instrument of claim 42 wherein each of the first and second electrodes has a portion spaced outwardly from the distal surface.

44. (Amended) The surgical instrument of claim 42 wherein the at least one of the first and second electrodes has the shape of a partial loop.

45. (Amended) The surgical instrument of claim 42 wherein the at least one of the first and second electrodes has the shape of a prong.

Sub D 1
47. (Amended) The surgical instrument of claim 41 wherein the portions of each of the first and second electrodes extending across the aspiration aperture are spaced outwardly from the distal surface.

c20
48. (Amended) The surgical instrument of claim 41 wherein the first and second electrodes extend parallel to each other.

49. (Amended) The surgical instrument of claim 41 wherein the first and second electrodes extend in the same plane.

50. (Amended) The surgical instrument of claim 41 wherein each of the first and second electrodes is cylindrical in shape.

Please add claims 60-90 as follows:

Sub D 1
c21
60. An electrosurgical instrument comprising:
an elongate probe member including a distal region, the elongate probe member defining a fluid-transmission lumen and defining a lumen opening at the distal region that communicates with the lumen;

an active electrode coupled to the elongate probe member and extending at least partially across the lumen opening; and

a return electrode coupled to the elongate probe member and extending at least partially across the lumen opening.

61. The instrument of claim 60 wherein:
the active electrode extends across less than the entire lumen opening, and
the return electrode extends across less than the entire lumen opening.

62. The instrument of claim 60 wherein:

the active electrode extends across the entire lumen opening, and
the return electrode extends across the entire lumen opening.

63. The instrument of claim 60 wherein one of the electrodes extends at least partially across the lumen opening at the lumen opening.

64. The instrument of claim 60 wherein one of the electrodes extends at least partially across the lumen opening proximal to the lumen opening.

65. The instrument of claim 60 wherein one of the electrodes extends at least partially across the lumen opening distal to the lumen opening.

66. The instrument of claim 60 wherein:
the elongate probe member includes a side wall at the distal region, and
one of the electrodes extends from the side wall and extends at least partially across the lumen opening.

67. The instrument of claim 60 wherein:
the distal region includes a distal surface, and
the active and return electrodes define an energy application surface that is parallel to a portion of the distal surface.

68. The instrument of claim 60 wherein at least a portion of the active electrode is parallel to a portion of the return electrode.

69. The instrument of claim 68 wherein the parallel portions of the active electrode and the return electrode each extend at least partially across the lumen opening.

70. The instrument of claim 60 wherein one of the electrodes has a portion with a prong shape.

71. The instrument of claim 60 wherein one of the electrodes has a portion with a partial loop shape.

72. The instrument of claim 60 wherein one of the electrodes has a portion with a rounded surface suitable to perform a smoothing function on tissue.

73. The instrument of claim 60 wherein one of the electrodes has a portion with an edge suitable to perform a mechanical scraping operation and an electrosurgical operation.

C21
74. The instrument of claim 60 wherein:
the distal region includes a distal surface, and
the active and return electrodes are each coupled to the distal surface.

75. The instrument of claim 60 wherein the fluid-transmission comprises an aspiration lumen.

76. The instrument of claim 60 wherein:
the fluid-transmission comprises an aspiration lumen,
the active and return electrodes each extend across the lumen opening distal to the lumen opening,
the active and return electrodes are parallel to each other,
the distal region includes a distal surface, and
the active and return electrodes define an energy application surface that is parallel to a portion of the distal surface.

77. An electrosurgical instrument comprising:
an elongate probe member including a distal region that includes a distal surface;

an active electrode coupled to the elongate probe member and including a portion that extends across and distal to part of the distal surface; and

a return electrode coupled to the elongate probe member and including a portion that extends across and distal to part of the distal surface,

wherein one of the electrodes includes an edge configured to perform a mechanical scraping operation and an electrosurgical operation.

78. The instrument of claim 77 wherein the portion of the active electrode and the portion of the return electrode define an energy application surface that is parallel to a portion of the distal surface.

c21
79. The instrument of claim 77 wherein each of the electrodes is coupled to the distal surface.

80. The instrument of claim 77 wherein:
the elongate probe member defines an aspiration lumen and defines a lumen opening at the distal surface that communicates with the aspiration lumen, and
the active and the return electrodes each extend across the lumen opening distal to the lumen opening.

81. A method of performing electrosurgery, the method comprising:
inserting into a body an electrosurgical instrument, the instrument including (i) an elongate probe member, the elongate probe member including a distal region, defining a fluid-transmission lumen, and defining a lumen opening at the distal region that communicates with the lumen, (ii) an active electrode coupled to the elongate probe member and extending at least partially across the lumen opening, and (iii) a return electrode coupled to the elongate probe member and extending at least partially across the lumen opening;

performing electrosurgery on tissue in the body by providing electrical energy to at least one of the electrodes; and

applying suction to the lumen.

82. The method of claim 81 wherein:
applying suction comprises drawing tissue toward one of the electrodes, and
performing electrosurgery comprises performing electrosurgery on the drawn
tissue.

83. The method of claim 81 wherein applying suction comprises aspirating the
tissue on which electrosurgery was performed.

84. The method of claim 81 wherein performing electrosurgery comprises
performing electrosurgery on tissue already severed from the body.

85. The method of claim 81 wherein performing electrosurgery on tissue
comprises severing tissue from the body, and the method further comprises:
performing electrosurgery on the severed tissue to reduce its size; and
aspirating part of the reduced-size tissue.

86. The method of claim 81 wherein:
one of the electrodes includes an edge,
performing electrosurgery comprises providing electrical energy to the edge, and
the method further comprises performing a mechanical scraping operation using
the edge.

87. The method of claim 81 wherein inserting an instrument comprises
inserting an instrument in which (i) the active and return electrodes each extend across
the lumen opening, (ii) the active and return electrodes are parallel to each other, (iii) the
distal region includes a distal surface, and (iv) the active and return electrodes define an
energy application surface that is parallel to and distal to a portion of the distal surface.

88. A method of performing electrosurgery, the method comprising:

inserting into a body an electrosurgical instrument, the instrument including (i) an elongate probe member including a distal region that includes a distal surface, (ii) an active electrode coupled to the elongate probe member and including a portion that extends across and distal to part of the distal surface, and (iii) a return electrode coupled to the elongate probe member and including a portion that extends across and distal to part of the distal surface, wherein one of the electrodes includes an edge configured to perform a mechanical scraping operation and an electrosurgical operation.

performing electrosurgery on tissue in the body by providing electrical energy to the edge; and

performing a mechanical scraping operation on tissue in the body using the edge.

c2/
89. The method of claim 88 wherein:

inserting the instrument comprises inserting an instrument for which the elongate probe member defines a lumen and defines a lumen opening at the distal surface that communicates with the lumen, and

the method further comprises applying suction to the lumen.

90. The method of claim 89 wherein:

inserting the instrument comprises inserting an instrument for which the active and the return electrodes each extend across the lumen opening distal to the lumen opening, and

applying suction comprises aspirating fluid across the return and active electrodes

In the drawings:

Please substitute the attached red-lined versions of Figure 2 and Figures 11A-11C. A

"Transmittal of Amended Drawings" is being filed concurrently.